

GROWING UP SOCIALLY

by

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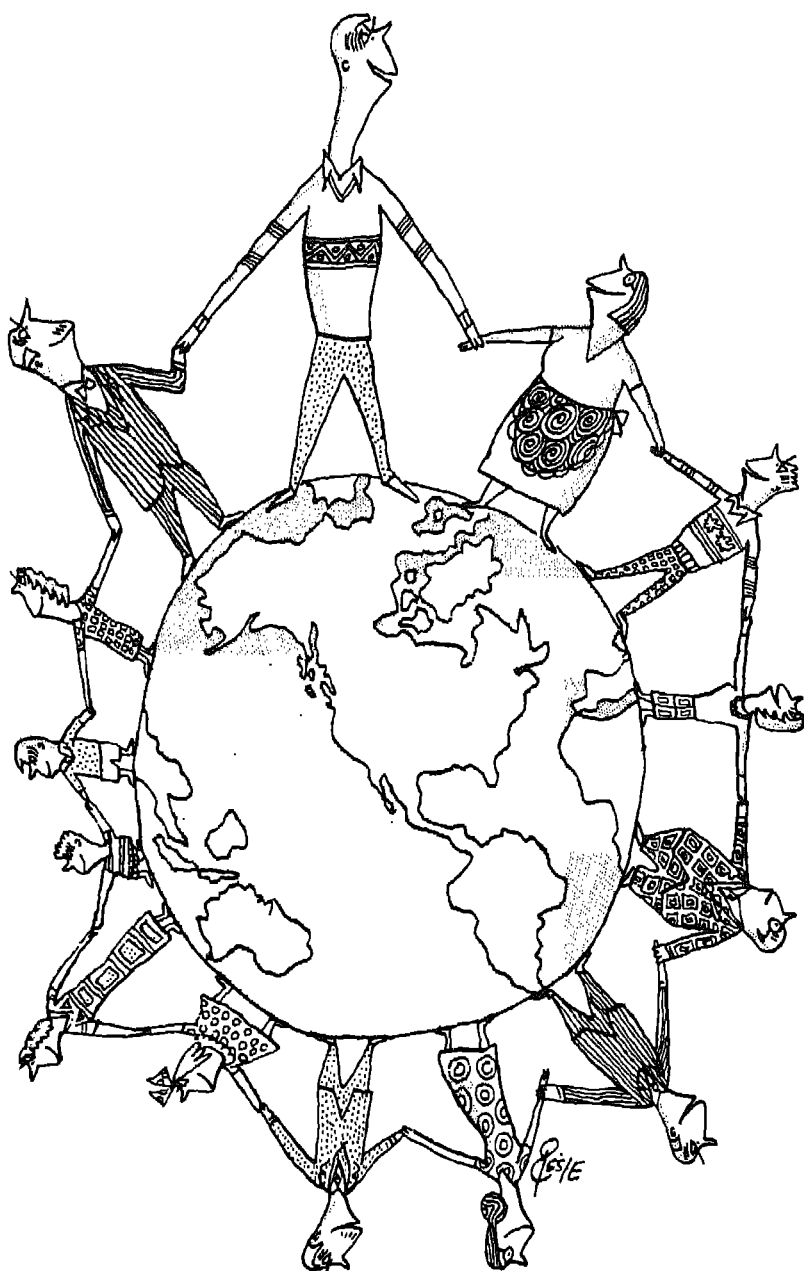
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Successful relationships with others are important in this social world of ours

What is social maturity?

MY, how grown-up you're getting to be!" This seems to be a favorite comment of older people, particularly close family friends; and it's apparently designed especially to irritate young people.

Yet it's perfectly true that you are growing at a surprisingly rapid rate these days—faster than you probably ever will again. And you are growing up in at least three different ways, some of which are easy to see and others which are not.

You are obviously growing up *physically*, adding inches to your height and pounds to your weight. This kind of growth can be measured with a ruler and a scale.

You are also growing up *mentally*, adding new words to your vocabulary, becoming more skillful in your ability to solve problems, and increasing your store of useful knowledge. You can't actually see this kind of growth, although all of us recognize that some of the people around us are much *smarter and better informed than others*. Psychologists can measure this mental growth roughly through the intelligence tests which you take periodically at school.

Growing up socially

Still another kind of growth which is even harder to measure is *social growth*. When you have fully developed in this area, you are *socially mature*. This is a ten-dollar term for the level of development you have reached in your ability to deal with other people.

It is probably more important than any other phase of your growth. How well you develop socially will determine how well you get along with people—your friends, your employers, your teachers, your family, and even people you don't know yet.



In working successfully with people, social maturity plays an important role.

Your social development is important not only because it influences how well you get along with others now, but also because it later will influence how successfully you can get and keep a job, and how far you can go in this social world of ours.

As long as you learn, and work, and find your satisfactions among other people, your usefulness and happiness will depend in large measure upon your maturity in social situations.

This social maturity is what your family friends usually mean when they say how grown-up you're getting to be. The comment irritates most of us because we like to think that we're *already* adult in all our actions and the ways in which we deal with other people. The fact is, however, that everyone grows up socially at a gradual rate, just as he does physically and mentally.

A young person develops considerably in each of these three areas each year. An interesting thing about this progress, however, is that he may be growing at a different rate in each area. You do not always find, for example, that the tallest boy in the class is also the smartest one. Or that the smartest girl is also the most popular. Many people who are

physically mature and even mentally superior never grow up socially. For others, social maturity just seems to come naturally.

Why become socially mature?

But why bother to develop socially, you may wonder. What difference will it make in your life? The answer is, you are born into a social world. From the moment you first see the light of day you are in contact with other people and groups. First there's the small unit—your family. Then there are larger and larger circles—your friends, school, town or city, state, and finally your country and the entire world. You're a part of all these groups.

If you lived in an isolated world of your own, you wouldn't have to learn how to talk to people, how to listen to them, or how to get along with them.

But you don't live alone. So your basic training has included means of communicating with people. Each day, as you come into contact with people, you encounter many *social situations*. In each one, there are various ways you can act. Which one you choose is the key to how socially mature you are. Effective social behavior doesn't come naturally. Like playing tennis or speaking Spanish, it's learned by practice, by guidance and, most of all, by your own efforts and desire to learn. It's determined



Like playing tennis, effective social behavior is learned through much practice.

by your parentage, your teachers, your friends, the heroes you have worshiped, the books you have read, the movies you have seen, and many other factors.

Why social maturity matters

There is one fact we all have to face—what others think of us and feel about us is vitally important. Even though there are moments when you may say to yourself, “I don’t care what people think of me!” the truth is that you *do* care. If you didn’t, you probably wouldn’t bathe regularly, or wear a shirt to work on hot summer days, or go to school, or plan to have a home of your own some day.

Analyze why you do most of the things you do. You’ll find that in most cases *it’s because you want the approval of others*. It’s shown in your desire to be popular with your friends and to earn the respect of your parents and sweetheart. Obtaining this approval is important because how well you get along in life depends to a very large extent upon what other people think of you.

How we grow socially

“All right,” you say, “I’ll agree that social maturity is important. But just what is it? How do I know whether I have it—or if my friends do?”

The easiest way to get a real understanding of social maturity is to watch carefully the actions of the persons who lack it most—young children. The first thing you will notice is that because they are small and relatively helpless, they are *dependent* on their parents and older members of their family for nearly everything—the food they eat, the clothes they wear, and the rules they live by.

Another thing you will observe quickly is that they are almost entirely *selfish*. Their own desires are all-important—their consideration for the wants of others almost nil. If they take a fancy to another child’s toy, they will grab it as quickly as their own. Any attempt of yours to return it to its rightful owner is likely to produce a loud and painful scene.

You will also notice that a child rarely *concentrates* on any one thing for very long. He may start to build a castle in his sand box, then five minutes later begin to play with his toy automobile, leaving the sand castle half finished. If sent upstairs to get his cap before he goes outside to play, he is likely to be found happily floating his celluloid duck in the bathtub a few minutes later, his cap and even his outdoors trip completely forgotten.



Children are dependent on their parents and other adults for nearly everything.

Another thing about small children that frequently worries their parents is the tall tales they tell. The little boy who runs up the cellar stairs shouting about the bronco-busting cowboy he's just seen in the basement doesn't make much sense to his mother. Nor does the little girl who solemnly tells her first-grade teacher that she's an orphan who doesn't have any home.

Young children have *highly active imaginations* and it is only gradually that they learn to tell the difference between their fantasies or daydreams and the world of reality.

One other easily noticeable trait about young children is their *vague ideas about time* and their inability to plan more than a few minutes or hours ahead. If given a bag of candy and told that it should be made to last all week, most children will eat it as rapidly as they can, even if it later makes them sick.

All these traits of young children—dependence on others, selfishness, inability to concentrate, undependability, inability to tell the difference between daydreams and reality, and the lack of ability to plan ahead—are signs of immaturity. No one expects a young child to be otherwise. As he grows older, however, every child is required to learn the rules of the social game. As he learns to feed himself and to put on his own

clothes, he becomes less dependent on his parents. As he learns that if he expects to get along with his brothers and sisters he must be more thoughtful of them and their belongings, he becomes a little less selfish. When he discovers that Santa Claus is only a delightful Christmas fairy tale, he learns a sharp lesson in the difference between fantasy and reality.

Learning social living

The lessons in social living that adults require children to learn are numerous, and they are often hard to learn because nowhere are they written down like rules in arithmetic or grammar. Most children learn them indirectly. They find out that if they behave properly, Mother and Father give them praise and affection. When they make a mistake, they're punished by disapproval.

Furthermore, some children have much better opportunities to learn these lessons than others. An only child who is showered with too much attention from indulgent parents usually does not have as many chances to learn his social lessons as one who has other brothers and sisters to compete for the attention and approval of his parents. A child who is frequently sick and requires an unusual amount of special attention may also have difficulty learning these lessons, as may a child with particularly wealthy parents. Children whose parents are divorced, either of whose parents is dead, or whose parents are very poor may have other kinds of problems that stand in the way of their becoming socially mature.



Some children have a more difficult time in learning the rules of social living.

Because every young person faces different problems, it is not difficult to see why each one grows up socially at a different rate, and why social growth is very different from physical and mental growth. In the following chapters we will discuss some of the methods you can use to find out how you compare with other persons of your own age in terms of social growth, and the goals you can work toward to become a socially mature adult.

How socially mature are you?

YOUR goal is to become a socially mature adult, although it's a stage you can't really reach until you *are* a full-fledged adult in years. You don't suddenly, overnight, become mature when you reach a certain age. It's a long, gradual process which you are in the midst of right now. And it takes most people longer to reach social maturity than to reach physical or mental maturity.

There are signs

One of the most important signs of your social growth at present is your increasing independence of others. When you were a little child, your parents did everything for you. Gradually, you began to feed yourself, to tie your own shoelaces, to get a glass of water by yourself. You began to look after your own needs—without help from your mother and father. This step-by-step process of learning to do more things for yourself is still going on. Each year you become more and more independent.

Growing up is easier for some people than for others. Every boy and girl wants to grow up physically—to be bigger and older. But becoming more independent is hard for many children. Your parents play a large part in encouraging this independence and in making it easier for you. Some parents unfortunately insist on doing everything for their children. By not permitting them to learn how to do things for themselves, these parents actually make it more difficult for their children to grow up. Even as adults, some of them never learn to take care of themselves.

Other clues

There are many other signs that show you are developing the habits and attitudes of a really mature person. If you would like to see where

you stand in the process of developing these characteristics, here's a test that you can take. The questions are based on a study of social growth in teen-agers—and they're aimed at YOU. They will give you a rough measure of where you stand on the social development ladder.

TEST OF SOCIAL MATURITY

DIRECTIONS: In answering the following questions, be very careful to describe your own behavior as accurately as possible. Read the three or four statements under each number and check the **one** that is most true of you. Then turn to page 17 to see how your responses compare with those of a group of students selected by their counselors as being exceptionally mature socially.

1. ☐ A. I do not know how to make my own breakfast.
☐ B. I think I know how to make my own breakfast, but I have never made my own breakfast.
☐ C. I sometimes make my own breakfast, but never make breakfast for others in my family.
☐ D. I sometimes make breakfast for myself and others.
2. ☐ A. I never go to dances.
☐ B. I rarely go to dances.
☐ C. I go to dances once in a while.
☐ D. I go to dances regularly.
3. ☐ A. I get along well with my family.
☐ B. I sometimes have trouble getting along with my family.
☐ C. I have trouble getting along with only one person in my family.
☐ D. I have trouble getting along with everybody in my family.
4. ☐ A. I like all my teachers.
☐ B. I like most of my teachers.
☐ C. I dislike most of my teachers.
☐ D. I dislike all of my teachers.
5. ☐ A. I know very few of the people in my classes.
☐ B. I know most of the people in my classes.
☐ C. I know hardly any of the people in my classes.
☐ D. I know all of the people in my classes.



6. ____ A. I would not want a European immigrant to move next door to me.
 ____ B. I would not mind if a European immigrant moved next door to me.
 ____ C. I would dislike very much to have any kind of foreigner move next door to me.
 ____ D. I would like to have a foreigner move next door to me.
7. ____ A. I believe America would be better off without letting foreigners come here to settle.
 ____ B. I believe America should let only a few foreigners enter each year.
 ____ C. I believe America should let in as many foreigners as it can accommodate without harming itself.
8. ____ A. I have never had a date.
 ____ B. I have had a few dates.
 ____ C. I have had many dates.
9. ____ A. I help clean house regularly.
 ____ B. I sometimes help clean house.
 ____ C. I never help clean house.
 ____ D. I clean my own room, but no others.
10. ____ A. I have a bank account in my own name.
 ____ B. I once had a bank account, but don't now.
 ____ C. I have never had a bank account of my own.
 ____ D. My parents save my money for me, so I don't need a bank account.
11. ____ A. I am never late to school.
 ____ B. I am sometimes late to school.
 ____ C. I am late to school very often.
12. ____ A. I never write letters to people.
 ____ B. I write letters now and then.
 ____ C. I write letters regularly.
13. ____ A. I sometimes feel life isn't worth living.
 ____ B. I always feel life isn't worth living.
 ____ C. I think life is neither good nor bad, just somewhere in between.
 ____ D. I think life is a happy and exciting adventure.



14. ____ A. I enjoy talking before a class or meeting.
 ____ B. I hate to talk before a class or meeting because I feel very embarrassed.
 ____ C. I don't mind talking before a class or meeting, but I would rather not have to do it.
15. ____ A. I think I am very popular.
 ____ B. I am about as popular as the average person I know.
 ____ C. I am not as popular as the average person I know.
16. ____ A. I frequently try to do creative work (such as writing fiction, painting, composing, etc.).
 ____ B. I occasionally try to do creative work (such as writing fiction, painting, composing, etc.).
 ____ C. I never try to do creative work (such as writing fiction, painting, composing, etc.).
17. ____ A. I play group games regularly.
 ____ B. I play group games now and then.
 ____ C. I seldom participate in group games.
18. ____ A. I can't stand to be alone very long.
 ____ B. I like to be alone, the more the better.
 ____ C. I like to be alone sometimes.
19. ____ A. I like to go to school.
 ____ B. Going to school is all right, but nothing to rave about.
 ____ C. I hate to go to school.
20. ____ A. Things upset me frequently.
 ____ B. Things upset me occasionally.
 ____ C. Things rarely upset me.
21. ____ A. I feel conspicuous a lot of the time.
 ____ B. I feel conspicuous once in a while.
 ____ C. I hardly ever feel conspicuous.
22. ____ A. I daydream a great deal.
 ____ B. I daydream once in a while.
 ____ C. I never daydream.



23. ____ A. I read world news regularly.
 ____ B. I read world news once in a while.
 ____ C. I hardly ever read world news.
24. ____ A. I make new friends readily.
 ____ B. I make a new friend once in a while.
 ____ C. I hardly ever make a new friend.
25. ____ A. I have several good friends of the opposite sex.
 ____ B. I have only one good friend of the opposite sex.
 ____ C. I have no good friends of the opposite sex.
26. ____ A. It makes me very jealous to see others win prizes or honors in my school.
 ____ B. It makes me only a little jealous to see others win prizes or honors in school.
 ____ C. I like to see others win prizes or honors in school.
27. ____ A. I think the United Nations idea has already failed.
 ____ B. I think the United Nations idea is all right, but is surely doomed to failure.
 ____ C. I think the United Nations idea will succeed.
28. ____ A. I think the idea of a world government is just a "pipe dream."
 ____ B. I think I shall live to see a world government.
 ____ C. I think there will be a world government, but not for several more centuries.
29. ____ A. I always offer my seat to old or crippled people.
 ____ B. I sometimes offer my seat to old or crippled people.
 ____ C. I seldom offer my seat to old or crippled people.
30. ____ A. I trust very few people.
 ____ B. I trust most of the people I know.
 ____ C. I trust almost all the people I know.
31. ____ A. I think the most important thing in life is to be happy.
 ____ B. I think the most important thing in life is to help others.
 ____ C. I think the most important thing in life is to earn a lot of money, because most things worth having can be bought.



The following answers are those given by a group of high school students who were rated as being very mature socially. Check yourself to see how you measure up to them.

31. B		
30. C	20. B	10. A
29. A	19. A	9. B
28. B	18. C	8. C
27. C	17. A	7. C
26. C	16. B	6. B
25. A	15. B	5. B
24. A	14. A	4. A
23. A	13. D	3. A
22. B	12. C	2. C
21. B	11. A	1. D

In a very rough way, you can class yourself as superior, above average, average, or below average on this social maturity ladder. If 27 or more of your answers agreed with those of the high school students who were selected by their counselors as being socially mature, you scored SUPERIOR. If you answered 19 to 26 of the questions right, you're ABOVE AVERAGE; 7 to 18, about AVERAGE. If only 6 or less of your answers agreed with those of the socially mature students, you're probably BELOW AVERAGE.



How do you compare with those students who were rated as being socially mature?

Remember, however, that this checklist is only a group of questions intended to help you think about the problems of social maturity, not a real test to measure how mature you actually are. Also remember that no one ever attains complete social maturity in all respects. You still have plenty of time to catch up in the areas where you may now be a little behind. *In the next chapter we will consider what the most important areas are, and you can see why some of your answers on the checklist differ from those of other students who are considered socially mature for their age.*

III

The socially mature person

NOW you know where you stand in this process of growing up socially. But as we said before, attaining social maturity is a gradual process. The important thing to know *now* is the goal you're shooting for. What is a person like who is really grown-up socially? What characteristics does he have that you will want to develop?

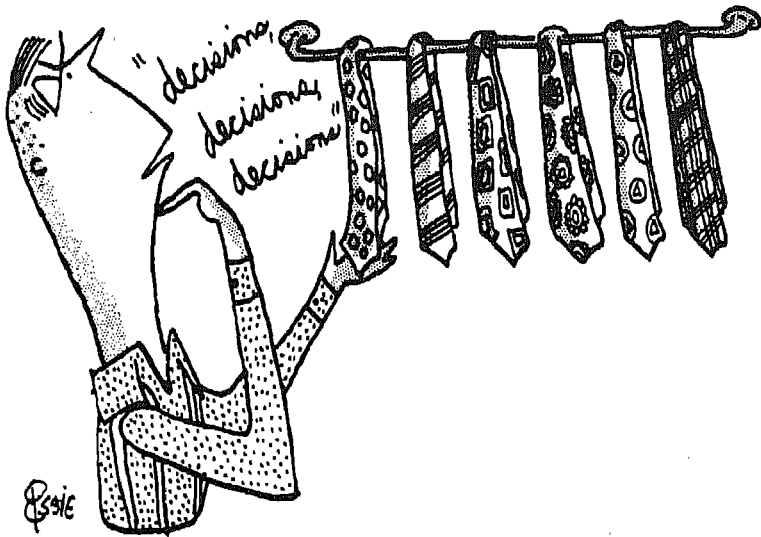
In the rest of the booklet we will discuss those traits that distinguish the socially mature person from the immature. They can serve as a guide for your own social growth—and for that of your friends. You aren't expected to have all these habits and attitudes now as a teen-ager. But you should be developing them.

Independence

We've already seen that independence is one of the first signs of growing up. Being able to do things without others—to be alone and like it—indicates social maturity. As a grown-up person, you'll go out alone, on occasion. Perhaps just for a long walk, or to a lecture, concert, or ball game in which your friends aren't interested. Because you feel competent to take care of yourself, you won't let lack of company stop you from doing the things you like.

This freedom or independence is the result of two things. First, you feel capable of guiding your own movements; you don't need someone beside you every time you take a step. Second, your family *grants* you this freedom because they, too, feel confident of your ability.

The socially mature person doesn't always depend on others for help. He doesn't expect his parents (or anyone else, for that matter) to be his servant, to wait on him. He knows how to take care of himself. He earns his own money and makes his own decisions about how to spend it. He has a bank account in his own name.



The mature person can make his own decisions, whether they're major or minor.

One of the most important characteristics of the mature person is his independence in making decisions. Throughout life you'll be faced with hundreds of decisions. Some of them will be small—like deciding which tie to wear. Others will be momentous—like choosing a new job or getting married. In either case, if you're really mature, you'll make these decisions for yourself. You'll probably ask the advice of your friends and family in some instances; they may have ideas which you haven't considered. But in the final analysis, you'll make up your own mind.

In choosing your life work, for example, the decision will have to be entirely up to you. After all, it's *your* life. You can look to others for advice, but you must rely on your own judgment in the final decision. It's the mature person who's confident of his own judgment and opinions. Others, consequently, have confidence in his judgment, too.

You can go too far

Independence is an important trait, but there is also a certain point beyond which too much independence becomes a handicap. In short, you can overdo it. Bill, for instance, was having difficulty on his first job. But he felt he didn't need any help. Either he would succeed—or fail—by his own efforts. He refused the help of fellows with whom he worked, and he made no attempt to ask his boss for advice. He was being childishly independent, and as a result, lost the job.

We can't be hermits and exist completely independent of others. We live in a society where practically every moment of our lives is spent with other people. While the socially mature person can take care of himself, he also needs the company, and often the help, of other people.

Taking on responsibilities

Remember Alibi Ike? He had a million excuses for everything, especially for *not* doing the things he didn't want to do. A mature person, on the other hand, takes on responsibilities even if he could easily avoid them. If your friends want to elect you president of your club, you'll accept with pleasure. If your boss wants to promote you to an important position, one that means added responsibility, you'll accept the challenge with confidence and pride.

During the war, there were many men who refused promotions because they couldn't face taking on the responsibility for making decisions and looking after others. And every day in business, someone misses a chance for a better job because he avoids responsibility. These people haven't yet learned that we increase our abilities and our confidence in ourselves by taking on, rather than by running away from challenging tasks. As one wise man put it, when we assume responsibilities we often assume happiness, because happiness grows out of our achievements.

And once you've assumed responsibility for a job, you've assumed responsibility for following through with it. The mature person doesn't leave a task unfinished. He sees it through after he's agreed to take it on.

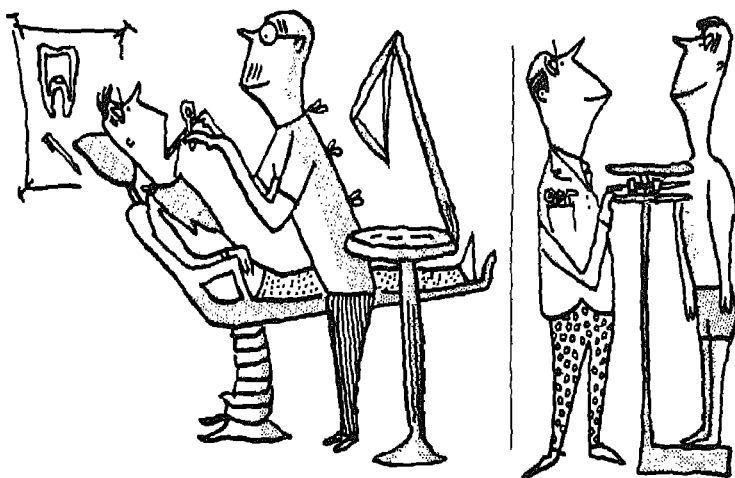


Accepting office in a club is a responsibility taken on by the mature individual.

Looking ahead

The mature person also has ability to see beyond today. He understands that the decisions he makes today may affect his future for months or years ahead. He doesn't spend all he earns—that's a favorite pastime of immature people. It's a "let's live for today" attitude that inevitably results in hardship. Unexpected illness, temporary unemployment and, of course, old age, happen to all of us. If we're not smart enough to see ahead and to be prepared, the job of taking care of us falls on others—family, friends, neighbors, or the community.

Regular medical and dental checkups, as well as regular savings and investments, are the means by which the socially mature person provides for his *own* future welfare. But it takes foresight and intelligent planning—both important traits of the socially mature.

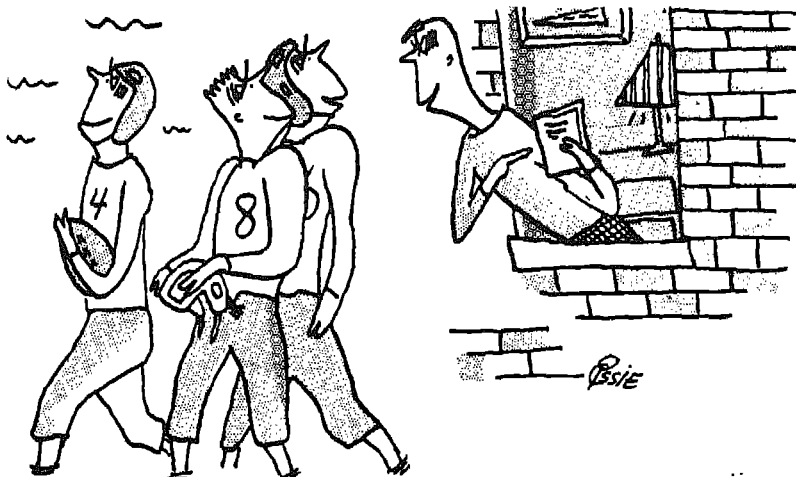


By regular physical checkups the mature person provides for his future welfare.

Moderation is the keyword

Another sign of real maturity is understanding that it's always possible to have too much of a good thing. The mature person takes his pleasures and even his work in moderation.

If you're on the way to maturity, you've already learned this. Even though you enjoy seeing your friends, this doesn't prevent your staying home several nights a week, minus guests. If swimming's your favorite sport, you swim often. But not every day. You're on your way to broadening your activities to *become* a well-rounded individual.



As you become more mature you'll gradually spend less time in sports activities.

Right now, for instance, sports may play a big part in your life. That's only natural and appropriate. As you become more mature, however, you'll gradually spend less time on them. Studies have shown that most mature people beyond the age of 25 don't on the average go out for sports activities more than once a week throughout the year. This probably agrees with what you, too, have observed. It's always the immature man who spends all his leisure around the ball park or who never has anything on his mind but football and fishing. Such people are reluctant to grow up--and they're seldom the successful and productive people of our world.

This doesn't mean that the socially mature person doesn't engage actively in sports. He does. But he does these things, like everything else, in moderation.

The positive approach counts

It takes real courage to leave some of the simple childhood ways behind and to assume the responsibilities that are increasingly expected of you as you get older. It's not always easy. When times are good and jobs easy to get and hold, most people seem able to adjust fairly well to life. But let a depression hit! Many people give up immediately when a tragedy—even a minor one—strikes. They can't seem to find the courage to start over again.

Stable and mature people facing the loss of a job or other serious personal problems do not get panicky. They don't let their world fall

apart. They just keep trying, carrying on even in the face of repeated failures. Individuals who run away from responsibilities rather than risk failure simply can't take it. The sad thing is that their actions usually bring more, not less, suffering upon themselves.

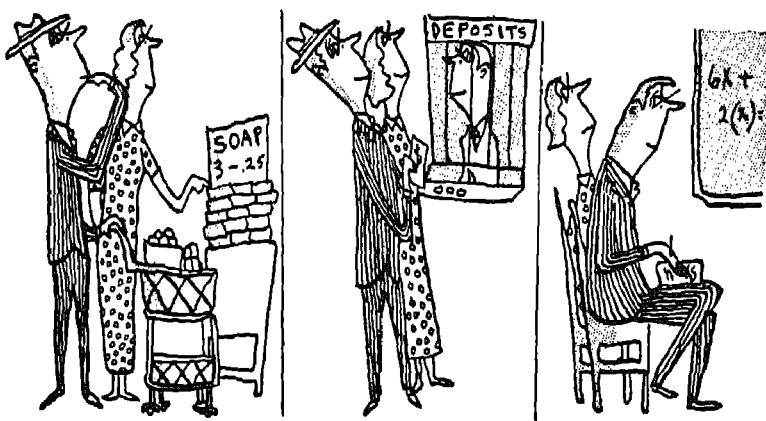
Our age is one of uncertainties and dangers. Most of your parents have weathered the hardships of a depression and the hazards of war. Now, as this adult world is coming closer to you, you hear a lot about another depression, more war, and even the chance of an atomic war which might destroy all of civilization.

How do you feel about life under these conditions? Do you feel that mankind is doomed, that it's futile to try to do anything constructive? It's an easy thinking pattern to fall into—and a dangerous one.

Remember that what happens to mankind, both economically and militarily, depends on what *people* do. Depressions and wars are not caused by the stars or by sun spots. They are the direct result of how people think and act, organize and vote, get along or fail to get along among themselves. In other words, wars and depressions are caused by people, and can be avoided by people. Whenever enough people accept the theory that depressions and wars are inevitable, that nothing can be done to halt them, then they are relatively sure to continue.

The socially and emotionally mature person takes an active and positive approach to the problems of life. He doesn't chew his nails and weakly worry about atomic war. Instead, he joins with other people in helping to prevent war.

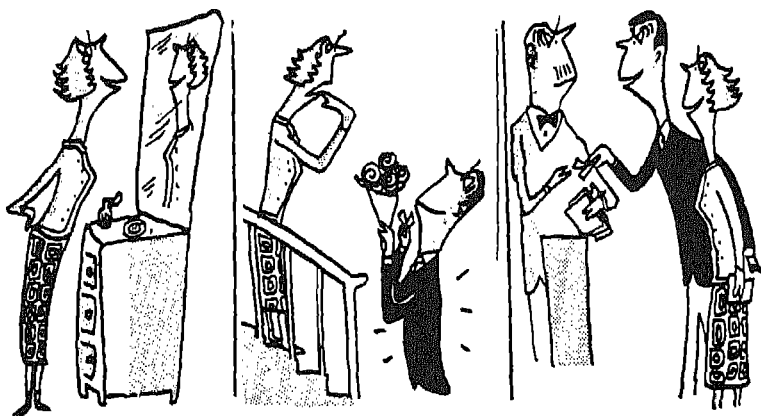
The socially mature person doesn't brood over possible problems he will face, such as a depression. He prepares himself and his family against such contingencies as best he can, by spending wisely, saving money,



The mature person spends wisely, saves money, and invests in further education.

and making sensible investments. If he lacks enough formal education to achieve the things he wants, he goes to school at night, or takes correspondence courses, or does any number of things to improve himself and make his position in society more secure.

The positive approach to life is the wholesome approach and the one that works. Along with a sense of humor it will do a lot to take you over the rough spots.



Emily's sense of humor turned an embarrassing situation into a successful evening.

A sense of humor

Emily had been waiting all semester for Larry, the current Dream Man at school, to ask her for a date. By some minor miracle this event finally occurred. Larry snagged her during chem lab one afternoon and asked her to go to the movies Saturday night. Came Saturday night Emily donned her new loafers, her best skirt, and her special cashmere sweater. Larry arrived at eight, and announced that he had managed to get tickets for the new play in town. He was all set to go in his blue serge—ready to do things up right. With only ten minutes before curtain time, Emily had no time to change. She could have cried at the thought of her new date dress hanging in the closet. Here had been her chance to make a really big impression and she had muffed it.

Fortunately, Emily was able to see the funny side of things. She tossed off a casual, rueful comment on the way she was dressed, and then proceeded to forget about it, and concentrated on having a pleasant evening.

A sense of humor takes the edge off failure and embarrassment. But it's a trait you are master of only when you don't take yourself too

seriously—when you don't consider everything that concerns you a matter of life or death. When you recognize and accept this fact, it's a sign of social maturity.

It's easy to laugh at the mistakes of others; a bit harder to laugh at your own. But when you see the humor in your failures and weaknesses, even in a humiliating experience, you'll keep mentally sound and be much less sensitive to failure. After all, we all fail in many of our efforts, especially if our goals are high.

Most tense and unpleasant social situations can be eased by liberal applications of humor. During the war, a rookie got so excited when he heard the call to "fall in" for an early morning inspection that he forgot to put on his trousers!

When a top-sergeant demanded an explanation, he said, "Just carelessness, sir. just carelessness."

The entire company doubled up with laughter in which even the tough sergeant couldn't help but join. As a result, the private got away with relatively light punishment.

In brief

Taking a quick glance at the socially mature person, we see:

- He's an individual who is independent.
- He can make his own decisions, take care of himself, and handle his own money.
- He likes to assume responsibilities and always sees that he carries through on them.
- He has foresight enough to plan for the future.
- He seldom overdoes anything.
- He's the fellow with a sense of humor and a positive approach to life and its problems.

IV

You live in a social world

THE socially mature person has learned to find his satisfactions in a world of people. He makes it a point to participate in groups. It has been found, for instance, that the socially mature adult usually belongs to three or more organizations, and attends meetings fairly regularly. This group participation, often involving work that has some community or social value, is the adult way of meeting the demands of our society. Being a member of a group is your way of recognizing the needs of others and accepting the responsibility of meeting these needs.

You can't, of course, be personally responsible for everybody and everything. Someone's sure to impose upon you if you feel *that* responsible. Allowing people to take advantage of you is an easy way to backslide down the ladder of social maturity. You're liable to forget your responsibilities to yourself. In other words, you must be *selective* in assuming responsibilities.

On the other hand, you've met people who just won't join anything. "I'm not interested," they tell you, or, "I haven't time." These people probably think they are showing their superiority. But, more likely, they feel too shy or inadequate to join a group, which shows that they are really immature socially. Some of the most productive people the world has ever known—people like Alexandre Dumas, Victor Hugo, Benjamin Franklin, and Albert Einstein—have found time for many group programs and social movements.

How social can you get?

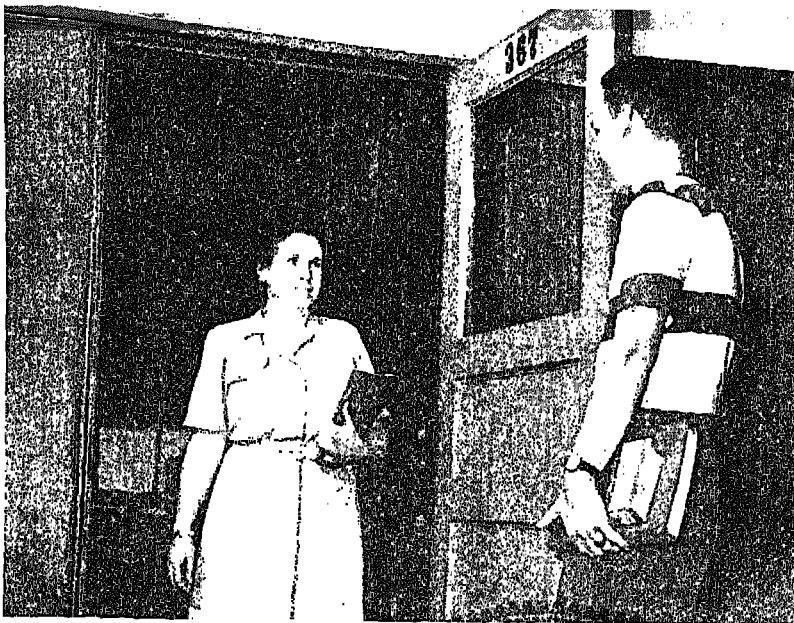
You can't attend a meeting or a social affair without seeing John. He's right there in the midst of things, admired and envied because he devotes so much time to others.

On the surface, it looks as though John should rate an "A" in social maturity. But have you talked to John's family? They are the ones who pick up his clothes after him, get his meals at the odd times he comes home, and rearrange their lives to take care of his personal responsibilities. John carries his group activities too far—so far, in fact, that he lacks social maturity.

We have said that there are people involved in almost every aspect of our lives. Still, all of us have moments when we're completely by ourselves. Group participation—"getting into the act"—is important to your social growth. But so is the ability to be alone at times and to like it. Group participation doesn't mean sacrificing *all* your privacy and devoting *all* your time to social activities.

Getting along with others

What do you want out of life? A happy family relationship? A good job? Loyal friends? Probably *all* of these. And all of these require relationships with other people. The socially mature person realizes that the better the relationships, the more successful and happy his life will be. But to get along successfully you have to have a real desire to do so.



When you're considerate of others, you'll find that good manners come naturally.

You can't have pleasant relations with people if you feel superior or indifferent toward them. The first and most important step is to understand and take a real interest in other people.

Since there is a certain amount of elasticity in social relations, there are no ironclad rules of behavior. Each social situation demands a different sort of reaction. However, there are some general mechanics which ease the way for good social relations.

Ordinarily, good manners are essential to smooth human relationships. When you're considerate of others and helpful, you'll find that good manners come naturally, even without consulting books on etiquette!

A versatile vocabulary is another important asset. Generally, your speech reflects your training and background. But even your vocabulary should change with the occasion. You wouldn't throw ten-dollar words at a child, and you wouldn't use the slang of the day when talking to an employer or teacher. Using the right language at the right time shows social sensitivity on your part.

A good salesman handles each customer differently. He uses different sales arguments and approaches according to the level and interests he senses in the particular prospect. It's an art—but it *can* be learned.

Other jobs like public relations and politics also require this versatility and congeniality. Even if your job requires little public contact, there's still the need for a good relationship between you and your fellow workers and your supervisors. It often provides the key to advancement as well, for we all want to do things for the people we like.

Groups vs. individuals

Of all the people you meet, some you love, some you like, others you are indifferent to, and still others you dislike intensely. This is only natural. But do you like or dislike a person on the basis of his merits as an *individual*?

Unfortunately, many of us do not think of people as individuals. We may, for example, dislike blondes, or people with freckles, or fat people, just because we once had an unpleasant experience with *one* such person. In the same way, some people develop permanent attitudes toward *all* Catholics, or *all* Jews, or *all* Frenchmen, or *all* Negroes on the basis of a single contact with some one member of these very large groups of people. This is what is known as "group thinking." You may have been subjected to it yourself.

Each of us is associated with some group—religious, racial, fraternal, or organizational. As a group we have certain similarities, but as individuals, we are all different. Yet sometimes we are judged by the action

of one or two members of the group to which we belong. Because groups are, after all, made up of individuals, they are bound to have the errors or defects of these individuals.

You may have had an unfortunate experience with one or two members of a group. Or perhaps you haven't been accepted by a group to which you wanted to belong. If you let the experience sour your attitude toward *all* group activities, you're not reacting in a mature manner. People who think of others in terms of the group, rather than in terms of its individual members, are not making their judgments on a sound and scientific basis.



The mature person thinks in terms of individuals rather than in terms of groups.

It takes emotional maturity and soundness of judgment to accept people as individuals, on their *own merits*. When you recognize that most people, singly or in groups, are worth while even though they are short of perfection, you're beginning to grow up socially.

You can't like everyone

What about those people you just *can't* like? Do you simply steer clear of them? Unfortunately, you can't. They're always popping up in business conferences, or as co-workers, or as the motorman of a bus, or as a particularly infuriating salesgirl.

As long as you don't let your dislike run away with you, you'll be all right. You *have* to carry on your business with these people, even though you don't especially like or admire them. It's a case of keeping your emotional reactions in check, making an attempt to be pleasant without overdoing it.

It's not always easy. But it can be done. And the ability to carry on your business even with those you dislike is a sign of maturity. Working peaceably with all types of people is not only successful living, it is democratic living.

Going even one step further, the mature person not only sees the importance of getting along with others, but is concerned with helping them. He contributes to organizations like the Red Cross and the Community Chest, helps provide support for his own family, and is willing to help his friends out when they need it.

To repeat

The really grown-up person:

- Participates in several group activities
- Knows how to get along with others—those he likes as well as those he doesn't like
- Judges each person on his own merits
- Has a real desire to help others

Facing life squarely

EVERYONE needs and wants affection and attention. But only children and immature adults need to have others demonstrate it all the time. Most people outgrow the need for the constant display of affection they were accustomed to as children. Others—the immature—see no advantage in getting bigger and older if they are less often given the attention and assistance they like. It's easier to be looked after completely by their parents than to support themselves. Getting and keeping a job means losing time from recreation and other pleasant activities.

But for future happiness and success, it is important to take on the responsibilities of the next stage in life. And you can do this if you have the training, the self-confidence, and a real desire to grow up.

You as an individual

When you were a child, you probably received a lot of attention. You received approval for every "cute" antic and were rewarded with a kiss or a hug for every sign of development. This affection filled a real need for you, because all the attention proved to you that you had the security of your parents' love. This is a basic part of childhood.

As you grow older, though, you are finding that attention and praise do not follow your every action. At school, there are just too many in a class for the teacher to give you very much individual attention. In later life, it's even harder to get praise and attention, for you have to *earn* them. As a child you were entitled to praise and attention just because you were *you*. Now, you have to *achieve* them.

Pretty hard to take? Perhaps. But as you grow older and more self-sufficient, you don't *need* so much praise. You'll feel secure in your family and your school, and later on, in your job. Someone won't have

to remind you *every day* that you're wonderful! And when you *do* receive praise, it will mean more, because you will really have earned it.

Those people who can't exist without continual praise just never do grow up. They are insecure and lack the self-confidence of a mature person. Because of this unsatisfied need, such people may wear loud clothes or raise their voices or behave in other childish ways to get attention. Needless to say, they won't get praise for their efforts. And who wants the kind of attention they get?

Some attention and praise are good for all of us. We want others to like and respect us. We want a certain amount of recognition for our work. And there are desirable ways of achieving these things. You can become a school leader by excelling in your studies or in sports. You can get ahead on the job by putting forth an extra bit of effort or because you have some particular abilities. These are socially desirable ways of showing your individuality. They are also more challenging, more permanent, and more mature.

The mature person conforms to the social customs in his ways of dressing and talking and acting. He shows his own particular value and individuality through his talents and abilities.

Criticism hurts

Remember the time your teacher took you aside and told you that you needed to put more time and effort into your English themes? Or the time your mother reproached you for not being more considerate to your grandmother on her last visit? If these particular incidents haven't happened to you, some similar ones undoubtedly have, and the criticism, deserved or not, hurt bitterly.

Well, that's natural. No one *likes* to have his weaknesses or defects pointed out! It's how you *take* criticism that counts. Most of the time it's being offered constructively. Once you realize this, you won't be so



Excelling in sports is one socially desirable way of achieving recognition.



You may have received criticism from a teacher or friend and been very hurt by it.

sensitive to criticism. You'll capitalize on it by using it for self-improvement. After all, people who care about you don't criticize you for the fun of it. There's usually some basis for their action.

Very often, people *ask* for criticism, then become angry when they receive it. If you ask a teacher to criticize something you have written, you should not expect to receive only praise. If you ask someone, "Honestly, how do you like my new suit?" don't be unhappy if he gives an honest but unflattering answer. And don't jump to the conclusion that he doesn't like you personally because he sees occasional flaws in you.

In addition to receiving criticism from others, it is well to keep something of a critical attitude toward yourself. The first step in achieving this is to learn to look upon yourself as something less than perfect. Once you adopt this point of view, you'll be able to see and accept your defects and weaknesses more easily, and you'll find yourself less sensitive to others' criticism.

Of course, you are not always on the receiving end of criticism. Sometimes you dish it out yourself! And it's just as important to *give* criticism graciously as it is to *receive* it graciously.

There's nothing more difficult than pointing out your friend's defects—and still keeping him for a friend! Remember how *you* feel when criticism is harsh and tactless. Use a little diplomacy when you *have* to criticize someone. Your criticism should be based on the desire to be helpful, rather than on the desire to hurt or ridicule. And too frequent

criticism, even of a tactful variety, does more harm than good. The most tactful way to proceed is by stressing some good points, along with the bad.

Criticism is something you don't always direct at individuals alone. Quite often, it's aimed at groups or organizations. Here again, you should guard against condemning *all* the activities or members of a group just because you disapprove of one member or one activity.

Competition and cooperation

By now you should have some idea of the importance of cooperating with others for the good of all, as well as for your own benefit. But *competition* with others is a very important part of our lives, too.

You learned about competition early in life. When you entered school you began to compete in sports and for honors or high grades. When you leave school, you'll compete for a job and for promotion in that job. Competition has its place in our lives. But it should be kept in its place. You'll find people with the extreme view that life is "just one big battle" to outdo others. The person who feels that way is convinced that he must push others aside so that *he* can get ahead.

What happens to that kind of person? What kind of a life does he lead? Well, he probably will never form a lasting friendship because selfish advantage is more important to him. He tends to concentrate on himself to a morbid degree. He broods over every failure, and is never content as long as someone is ahead of him on the financial or social ladder. He's afraid to relax because he feels that everyone else is after the same things and is only waiting for a chance to take his successes away from him. It doesn't sound like a very happy existence, does it?

Although you'll face many situations in life when it's necessary to compete with others, that competition can be a friendly sort of rivalry rather than a deadly battle. Have you ever attended a meeting where people vied with each other in contributing to a worthy cause? In such a case, rivalry is good and heartwarming to watch.

In friendly competition, fair play and consideration are the rules. Unfortunately, much of the competition we encounter in life is unpleasant. The race for a job in our competitive economic world can be a pretty painful experience. And there are always some individuals who stoop to underhand methods, such as lying about their competitors. Such tactics are not really necessary for success and they frequently boomerang. It is possible to retain your dignity and self-respect in this type of competition by arming yourself with superior preparation, better work habits, and a pleasing and mature personality. It's true that many a person has "succeeded" by means of ruthless, cold competition. But many people have also suc-

ceeded by gaining the cooperation and help of others. You can get just as far by winning the respect and confidence of the people about you. And you'll feel better about it!

As our civilization becomes more and more complex, this type of cooperation becomes more important. Success is becoming more the consequence of intelligent cooperation and less the result of strong-arm competition. It is the socially mature person who recognizes this.

It's love

If you're just beginning to date you probably have at least several friends on your date list and are looking forward to having many more. You're not interested in "going steady." You're trying your wings. You want to find out as much about different kinds of people as possible. Each new person means a new and exciting experience, one that helps you to decide what you want in the person you hope to marry later.

But gradually, as you leave your high school days behind, you should start to narrow down the field until, when you reach adulthood, you make that final choice.

The socially immature person *never* narrows down the field. He continues discarding one person in favor of another until he suddenly finds himself older, harder than ever to please—and still unmarried.

Summary

In this chapter we've discussed several more characteristics of the people who have successfully reached maturity. Here they are:

The socially mature person:

- Seeks attention and approval of others through worthwhile achievements
- Gives and accepts criticism constructively
- Believes in intelligent cooperation
- Narrows his love interests to a single person when the proper time comes

VI

Story of an immature young man

THE alarm jangled loudly, and Jim, buried beneath the covers, reached up and shut it off with a practiced hand.

"Jim! Oh, Jim!" His mother's voice sounded like a second alarm. "Come down for breakfast right away. You'll be late for work again if you don't hurry!"

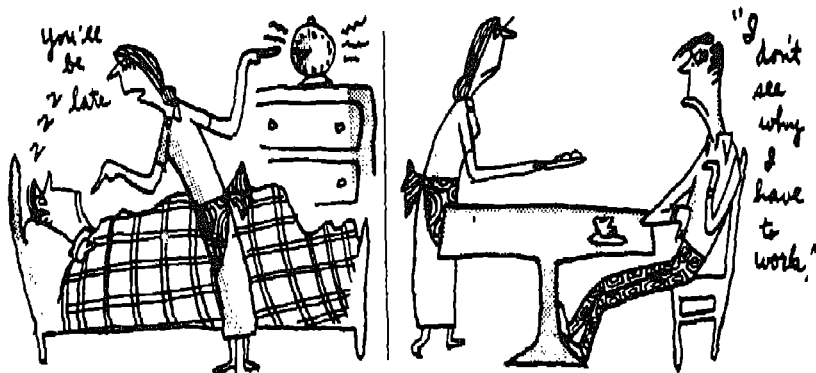
Jim's head came out from under the covers. "I'll be down in a few minutes—gotta get a little more sleep first."

"Come on now, dear," his mother said patiently. "I've got your bath ready and breakfast on the table."

"Oh, all right," Jim said irritably, "I'm coming!"

"I don't know why I have to work, anyway," he whined as he sat down at the breakfast table. "What does it get you? Here it is only the twentieth of the month and I'm flat broke. By the way, can you lend me a couple of dollars?"

Jim's mother handed him a dollar with a weary sigh. "You've borrowed almost all of the money I was saving for a new stove. Your father





would be furious if he knew! You know, dear, you didn't really need another new suit this month."

"Quit naggin', Ma!" Jim snapped. "I've got to keep up my appearances. You don't want your son to be an office clerk all his life, do you?"

And he stormed out of the house.

Jim's mother started to clear up the breakfast dishes. Then she went up to clean Jim's room and get his soiled clothes ready for the laundry. She'd been doing this for 22 years, ever since Jim was born; she was used to caring for him. She had a feeling, though, that these duties should have ended long before now. But, after all, Jim *was* her son.

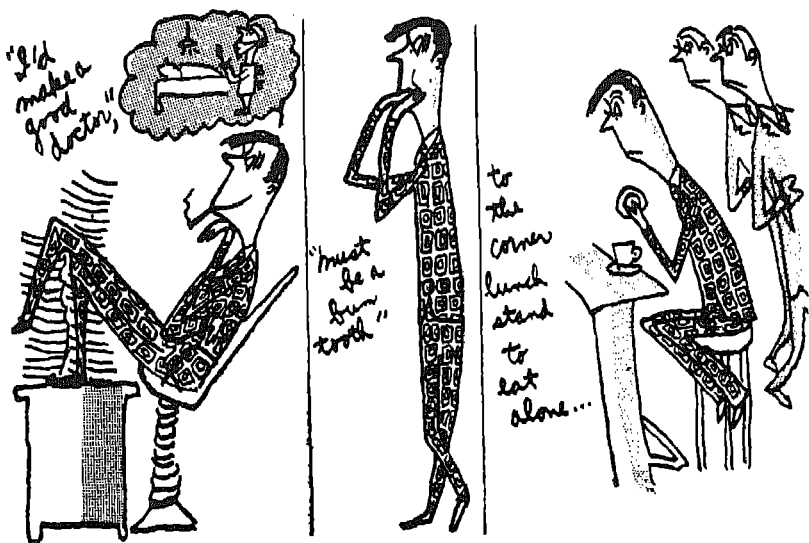
Meanwhile, Jim was driving to work, alone as usual. A couple of fellows who he knew worked near his office were running for the streetcar, but Jim didn't bother to stop and offer them a lift.

"I'm late as it is," he thought. "Let the dopes take the streetcar."

Jim, the worker

Reaching his office, Jim breezed down the aisle to his desk, waving hello and giving the old personality smile to all the girls. He hardly glanced at the men. After all, they were his competitors.

He sat down at his desk and began to work. "Gosh I hate this," he thought to himself, gritting his teeth. "Well, I know what's expected of me. And that's all they'll get out of me." While he worked, Jim pictured himself, gowned in white, about to perform a delicate operation, to the admiration of all.



"I'd make a good doctor," he decided. "But that would mean studying all my life, doing without clothes and girl friends. Life's too short for *that*."

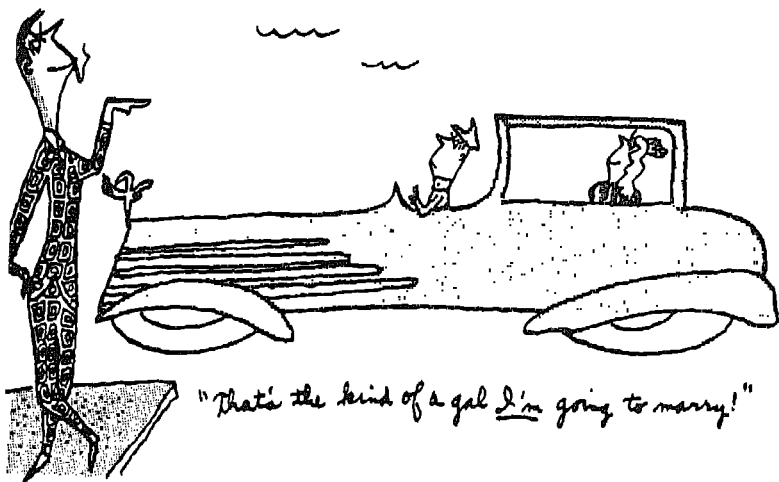
Suddenly, Jim felt a sharp twinge in one of his back teeth. He'd been feeling it off and on for the past three months.

"Must be a bum tooth. I guess I ought to go to the dentist." Then he shuddered a little as he thought of the dentist's drill. "Oh, well," he told himself, "it will probably go away by itself."

At noon, Jim walked to the corner lunch stand and ate alone. It was bad enough to work in that place without hobnobbing with the office gang. They were so stupid—he had nothing in common with them. All they ever talked about was their work, as if getting ahead at the office was the most important thing in their lives. *Jim* had better things to look forward to.

After lunch he bought a newspaper and quickly scanned the "Business Opportunities" section. "Some day," he mused, "I'll get into a racket and make a million. The trick is to make a pile when you're still young. Maybe my old man will lend me some money to buy into a really good proposition. None of this two-bit stuff for me. I'm not going to work hard all *my* life for *peanuts*."

As he stood idly on the corner, reading the column, he glanced up occasionally to watch the girls passing by. Jim had plenty of dates—but seldom with the same girl twice. He didn't want any women getting ideas about *him*.



A chauffeur-driven car pulled up to the curb just then. A beautifully dressed young woman got out and went into the next building.

"What a dish!" Jim thought. "And plenty rich, I'll bet. That's the kind of a gal *I'm* going to marry—and let her old man take care of our future."

Jim smiled confidently and walked back to work. About the middle of the afternoon, some of the fellows near him began discussing their plans for the week-end. One of the men said he had to study for his law exams, coming up at night school next week. Another said he was driving his parents to the country because he thought they all needed some fun. And another was going to a lecture on atomic energy.

"Everybody in the place has some stupid way to spend the week-end," Jim thought contemptuously. "Who cares about the atomic age, anyway. You can't do anything about it, so why worry? And why would anyone want to do anything so dull as taking his *parents* out riding? *I* have better things to do."

A typical evening

After work, Jim drove home, expecting dinner to be on the table waiting for him, as usual. But it wasn't.

"Dad had to work late tonight, so dinner will be delayed a while, son," his mother explained.

"Oh, for gosh *sakes!* I've got things to do. I can't wait around all night for Dad to come home. Doesn't he ever get tired of working for that *slavedriver*? He keeps Dad overtime at least twice a week."



Jim sat down resignedly and lazily glanced at the evening paper—the racing news, in particular. Maybe he could figure out a good bet for tomorrow’s daily double.

After dinner, Jim decided to go to a movie. He put on an old sport shirt—it was hot and there wasn’t any sense in getting all dressed up for other people. As he was about to leave, he noticed that a distinguished looking man whom he’d never seen before was sitting in the living room with his parents.

“Oh, Jim,” his father called. “I’d like you to meet an old friend of mine.”

Jim thrust out his hand to the old gent and said brusquely, “Gladta-meetcha. I’ve gotta be going now.”

Why should he spend time with Dad’s old-fogy friends? Jim felt rather pleased with himself. He’d gotten out of a lot of work today. He had a whole evening to himself. He whistled as he headed for the movies.

Back at home, the distinguished looking man said to Jim’s father, “So that’s your son. From the way you spoke about him, I expected someone a bit more polished. He doesn’t seem to have much social sense, if you’ll pardon my saying so. Of course, he *looks* like a nice boy.

“But,” the man continued, “I’m afraid he’s not quite the person I had in mind to groom for the junior executive spot in my firm.”

Jim was still whistling as he entered the movie.

VII

Story of a mature young man

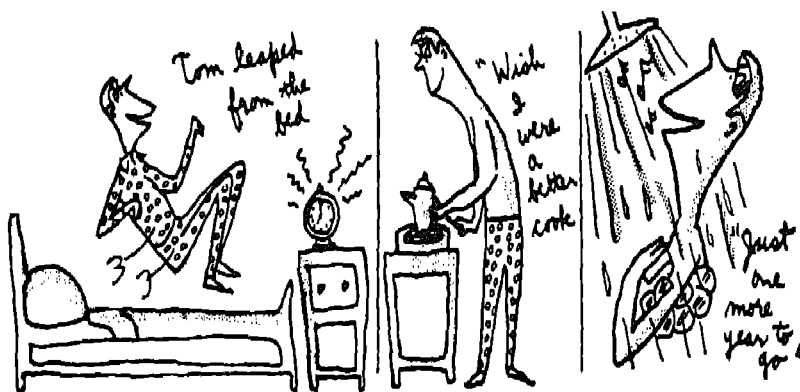
ABOUT a half-hour before Jim's alarm went off, another alarm sounded in a room about 100 miles away. And another fellow awoke to meet the day.

Tom, who had been a high school classmate of Jim's, leaped from his bed the instant he heard the alarm. He lived alone, about a mile from State University, and if he'd gone back for an extra "twenty winks" he'd have missed his first class.

Just before ducking under the shower, Tom put the water on to boil for coffee. Because he had to work evenings and study late, getting up in the mornings was a strenuous process.

"Just one more year to go," Tom thought as he turned on the shower. "Gosh, it seems like a long time ago when I was still in high school—and decided to become a lawyer. Now, here I am, not yet finished with school and thinking of marriage."

Tom turned off the shower. "I can still remember how I felt when Dad told me he couldn't afford to send me to college," he reminisced.





"Well, I suppose working my way through school has probably been good for me, but it sure hasn't been easy. *Especially* this early in the morning." Tom sighed and started to work on the electric plate.

"Wish I were a better cook," he thought. "But I sure have learned how to fry a mean egg. That's what can happen when a guy's gotta be frugal."

After breakfast, Tom did the dishes, cleaned up his room and left for class—a mile walk. But it saved bus fare and kept him in good shape.

On the way to class, he was joined by Joe Barnes, a pre-med student who roomed across the street from him.

"Hi, Joe! Where were you yesterday? I waited about ten minutes for you."

"I'm sorry I couldn't let you know, Tom, but I went to the infirmary to get that cut on my foot taken care of. I was afraid if I let it go, it might get infected."

Tom nodded and they walked on to the campus, parting at the Med building where Joe had his classes.

Tom walked over to the Law building where his friend Bill Jones was waiting for him.

"Whaddaya say, Tom? All set for a quiz?"

Tom smiled. "Guess so. How about you?"

"Okay, I guess," Bill answered. Then he lowered his voice and said meaningfully, "I just saw you with that Barnes fellow, Tom. I've got nothing against him personally, but after all, palling around with a guy like that . . ."



"Joe's a swell person," Tom replied good-naturedly, "and a good friend. I'm lucky to have two friends like you and Joe. You know, I like you both for the same reason—you're both nice characters."

Bill looked a little shamefaced and Tom smiled. "Come on now, or we'll be late for class."

After class, George Ringling came up to Tom and Bill.

"Say, how about you and Janice coming to our frat formal next Friday night, Tom?" George asked.

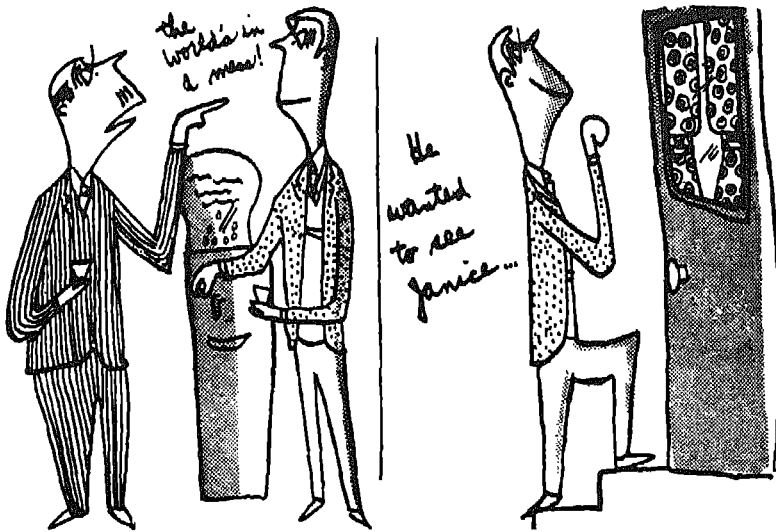
"I'd sure like to, George," Tom said, "but I work Friday nights."

"Darn, that's right. We'll have to throw our next brawl on a Saturday night to make sure you can come."

Everyone laughed. Tom had a lot of good friends in George's fraternity. He was rushed by them when he first got to school. But, of course, Tom couldn't afford fraternity life and told them so right off the bat. He got in on a lot of their doings, anyway.

At noon, Tom went to the Student Council meeting. He was an officer so he couldn't miss a session even if it meant going without lunch. Student Council was the only group he could allow time for if he were going to do the job right. He would have liked to join other campus groups but knew he couldn't if he were to work his way through college.

After classes, Tom went to his job, where he greeted everyone from the janitor on up to his manager with a cheery grin. They were all his friends. Tom liked people and he had made it a point to be friendly to those with whom he associated.



Several of the men, including the manager, had had Tom over for dinner. A family meal was a treat to a guy who lived alone and fixed most of his own food!

Today, the manager came over to see how Tom was doing.

"I'm going to hate to lose you, Tom," he smiled. "You're the kind of a fellow I'd like to have permanently. But I know you'll make a darn good lawyer."

During the rest period later in the afternoon, Philip, an older man, joined Tom at the water cooler.

"The world's in some mess, Tom. According to the papers, war can start any day. And if it comes, it'll be the end of every last one of us this time. Yes, sir! And there's nothing we can do about it, either. Just turn in our chips and call it a day, that's all."

"Oh, I don't think it's quite that bad," said Tom. "Maybe if enough people get together, peace can be made to work. If enough people try hard, maybe we can put an end to war."

"I hope you're right, my boy, but I'm afraid it's too late now. It looks mighty hopeless from where I sit, mighty hopeless."

Tom smiled and changed the subject. Philip was always a "Calamity Jane" and there was no point in arguing with him.

"Except for his worrying all the time, Phil's a nice person," Tom thought. "You can't dislike a guy just because he worries—or because he disagrees with you."

Tom was tired when he left work, but he wanted to see Janice before



going home. This was the most pleasant part of the day, these few minutes with the girl he expected to marry.

"Why, Tom, how wonderful," Janice greeted him at the door. "I thought you might not be able to make it tonight. Let's have some coffee."

Tom had settled on Janice back in his sophomore year. During high school, and even in his first year of college, Tom had gone out with various girls. But after he really got to know Janice, things were different. She was the one he preferred, above all others.

Tonight, they spoke of their plans for marriage and a home. Although they knew they'd have to wait for a few years, they found it fun to plan their future together.

It was late when Tom got back to his room; it had been quite a day. He forced himself to study a little and then sat down to write to his mother. He wrote her often, because he didn't want her to worry, but he never told her how tired he was or how hard he was working. His letters were always cheerful, because he felt how lucky he was to have a chance to get an education and to be able to work toward the kind of future he wanted.

Conclusion

IN the last two chapters you saw typical examples of a socially *immature* and a socially *mature* person. The contrast between them is striking. And what makes the difference? Jim is still behaving socially like a child. He expects others to take care of him. He makes it a point to shun responsibilities and has no real sense about the importance of planning for the future. And what contributes even more to his failure is the fact that he has never learned to get along with others.

Tom, in contrast, would rate Superior on any social maturity scale. If you analyze his story you'll see that he already possesses most of the traits of maturity that we've discussed in this booklet and which we're summarizing below.

The socially mature person—

- 1.—is independent and can take care of himself
- 2.—can make his own decisions
- 3.—earns and handles his own money
- 4.—assumes responsibilities and follows through on the jobs he undertakes
- 5.—plans for the future
- 6.—seldom overdoes any of his activities, even his favorite sports
- 7.—takes a positive approach to life and doesn't let his problems get him down
- 8.—has a sense of humor
- 9.—participates in group activities
- 10.—knows how to get along with others
- 11.—judges people on their own merits
- 12.—helps others

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16.—narrows his love interests to a single person when the proper time comes

By answering the questions in Chapter II, you've had a chance to get a rough idea of how well you're doing in developing these characteristics of social maturity. Attaining maturity is a gradual growing-up process. Like anything else, the lessons of growing up socially *can be learned*. Or, you've found what the rules are and how they apply to your own life; you've taken an important step toward attaining maturity.



Once you learn the rules of social living, you're on the way toward maturity.

